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# FAIRMOUNT MINERALS, LTD.

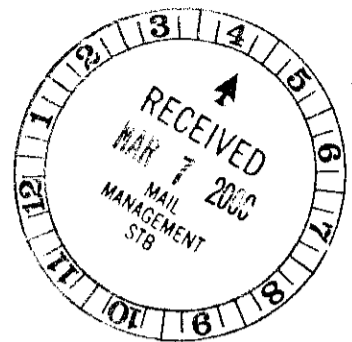
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Thomas A. Mitropoulos  
Vice President - Traffic

February 28, 2000

Mr. Vernon A. Williams, Secretary  
Surface Transportation Board  
Office of the Secretary  
Case Control Unit  
Attn: STB Ex Parte No. 582  
1925 K Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

ENTERED  
Office of the Secretary  
MAR 15 2000  
Part of  
Public Record



Dear Sir:

My name is Thomas A. Mitropoulos. I am Vice President of Transportation for Fairmount Minerals, Ltd. And have held my position for 40 years. Fairmount Minerals is engaged in the production of industrial minerals, sands, and slag with operating plants in Denver, CO, Wedron, IL, Troy Grove, IL, Serena, IL, Coffeen, IL, Baldwin, IL, Harvey, LA, Bridgman, MI, Wexford, MI, Richmond Dale, OH, Chardon, OH, Portland, OR, Roff, OK, Copper Hill, TN, Galveston, TX, and Maiden Rock, WI. The industrial sand plants of Fairmount Minerals have been engaged in the production and shipments of large percentages of industrial sands throughout the United States. We have been in business for well over one hundred years. Each and every location being a major user of rail service in the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

Our company controls the routing and assumes responsibility for payment of freight charges in most cases. As many companies in the manufacturing segment, we depend on rail transportation to keep freight costs down to remain competitive into the areas we serve. The purpose of this letter is to comment on the issues to be discussed on March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2000 in Ex Parte 582.

We encourage the Surface Transportation Board to focus on whether the purposed CN-BNSF combination is good for shippers, not on potential downstream effects. It should be judged on its merits as past mergers were evaluated. Our main concern of course is service. I understand that CN and BNSF have committed to ensure that service levels do not suffer after the combination. Accordingly the Surface Transportation Board should focus on their ability to deliver service.

We urge the board to require BNSF and CN to adhere to this representation and to take all action necessary to avoid service disruptions and failures.

Respectively,

FAIRMOUNT MINERALS, LTD.

Thomas A. Mitropoulos

TAM/lj